Command line Editing

The command line works like a single-line word processor, allowing you to edit any part of the command at any time before you press **Enter** to execute it, or **Esc** to erase it. The command line you enter can be up to 1023 characters long.

You can use the following editing keys when you are typing a command (the words **Ctrl** and **Shift** mean to press the Ctrl or Shift key together with the other key named):

Cursor Movement Keys:

←	Move the cursor left one character.
→⎵	Move the cursor right one character.
Ctrl+← ⎵	Move the cursor left one word.
Ctrl+→ ⎵	Move the cursor right one word.
Home	Move the cursor to the beginning of the line.
End	Move the cursor to the end of the line.

Insert and Delete:

Ins	Toggle between insert and overtype mode.
Del	Delete the character at the cursor.
Backspace	Delete the character to the left of the cursor.
Ctrl-L	Delete the word or partial word to the left of the cursor.
Ctrl-R or Ctrl-Bksp	Delete the word or partial word to the right of the cursor.
Ctrl-Home	Delete from the beginning of the line to the cursor.
Ctrl-End	Delete from the cursor to the end of the line.
Esc	Delete the entire line.

Execution:

Ctrl-C or Ctrl-Break	Cancel the command line.
Enter	Execute the command line.

Most of the command-line editing capabilities are also available when a **CMD.EXE** command prompts you for a line of input. For example, you can use the command-line editing keys when DESCRIBE prompts for a file description, when INPUT prompts for input from an alias or batch file, or when LIST prompts you for a search string.

If you want your input at the command line to be in a different color from **CMD.EXE**'s prompts or output, you can use the Display page of the OPTION dialogs, or the InputColors directive in *CMD.INI*.

CMD.EXE will prompt for additional command-line text when you include the escape character as the very last character of a typed command line. The default escape character is the caret [^]. For example:

```
[c:\] echo The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy^
More? sleeping dog. > alphabet
```

Sometimes you may want to enter one of the command line editing keystrokes on the command line, instead of performing the key's usual action. For example, suppose you have a program that requires a **Ctrl-R** character on its command line. Normally you couldn't type this keystroke at the prompt, because it would be interpreted as a "Delete word right" command.

To get around this problem, use the special keystroke **Alt-255**. You enter **Alt-255** by holding down the **Alt** key while you type **255** on the numeric keypad, then releasing the Alt key (you must use the number keys on the numeric pad; the row of keys at the top of your keyboard won't work). This forces **CMD.EXE** to interpret the next keystroke literally and places it on the command line, ignoring any special meaning it would normally have as a command-line editing or history keystroke. You can use **Alt-255** to suppress the normal meaning of command-line editing keystrokes even if they have been reassigned with key mapping directives in the *.INI* file, and **Alt-255** itself can be reassigned with the CommandEscape directive.